

The Doctrine of Christian Baptism
Trinity Baptist Church Discipleship Training
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Introduction:

Baptism is a command of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of the two ordinances of the Christian Church. Unfortunately, it is also a doctrine that is surrounded by disagreement and controversy among believers. While admitting the lack of conformity among believers, we must never consider it a minor issue of doctrine. The sacraments are one of the three marks of a true church of the Reformed tradition. Our Lord did not leave this ordinance to the imagination of men. The purpose of this study is to examine the Biblical doctrine of baptism, including the subjects of baptism as well as the mode and meaning of baptism.

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Authority for a Discussion on Baptism

- I. The Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice
 - A. This is clearly taught in the London Confession of 1689 (As well as the Westminster Confession)
 1. Chapter 1:6 – “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.”
 2. Chapter 1:10 – “The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.”

- B. The regulative principle should govern our worship, i.e., only those elements of worship commanded by God are to be allowed in worship
1. London Confession of 1689, 22:1 – “. . . the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.”
 2. The ordinances are considered a part of Biblical worship
London Confession of 1689, 22:5 – “The reading of Scriptures, preaching and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as also the administration of baptism, and the Lord’s supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to him, with understanding, faith, reverence and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation with fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner.”
- C. While believing in the unity of Scripture, as baptism is an ordinance of the New Covenant church our primary source of primary instruction concerning baptism must be the New Testament
1. The New Testament is the final and clearest revelation of God to man.
 2. It is often explained using the Augustinian statement, “The New is in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed.
 3. The clearest revelation of practice in the New Testament church is found in the New Testament. Paul told Timothy he was writing to establish proper practice within the church
1 Timothy 3:14-15 NAU - " I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."
 4. Some errantly seek instruction for Baptism from the ordinances of the Old Covenant.
Walter Chantry writes: “No Baptist begins to seek an answer to the question, ‘Who should be baptized?’ by studying the Bible’s doctrine of the covenants. Rather, he begins with the New Testament texts which deal directly with the term ‘baptize.’ In a later study of Covenant Theology, he finds confirmation and undergirding of his conclusions.”
(Chantry, Walter J. *Baptism and Covenant Theology*. P. 1)
 5. Fred Malone affirms the unity of Scripture:
“The New Testament also describes the unity between the two testaments in terms of typological promise and fulfillment. Thus, through Jesus Christ, born-again Christians (circumcised and uncircumcised) become the fulfilled children of Abraham (Galatians 3), the true Jew and circumcision (Romans 2:29, Philippians 3:1-3, Colossians 2:11-12), the new temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:19ff.) and, therefore, the new Israel of God (Galatians 6:16, Jeremiah 31:31-34). This unity between the testaments must be affirmed over and over, especially when exploring the question of infant baptism.”
(Malone, Fred, *The Baptism of Disciples Alone*. P. 45)

- II. Baptism rests upon the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ
- A. The Great Commission
Matthew 28:18 NAU - "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."
1. The word for authority is ἐξουσία (exousia) which points to authority with the power of enforcement.
 2. On the basis of this authority Jesus commanded His disciples to carry the gospel into the world, making disciples of those who believe, baptizing them, and then instructing them according to His commandments.
- B. Baptism must be regulated by His divine instruction
1. The new believer submits to baptism by the command of Christ
 - a. Baptism marks the commencement of discipleship
Matthew 28:19 NAU - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,"
 - b. As disciples are made, they are baptized as an act of obedience and discipled in the doctrines of Christ.
 - c. "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" describes the full submission of the new believer to the authority of the triune God
 2. The church conducts baptism by the command of Christ

The Meaning of Baptism

Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ

- A. This union is an essential element of God's eternal plan of redemption for His elect
1. The Father sent forth His Son that we might be reconciled to Him. This is only possible through our union with Christ in His work of redemption.
 2. John Murray – "The fountain of salvation itself in the eternal election of the Father is 'in Christ.' The Father elected from all eternity, but He elected in Christ. We are not able to understand all that is involved, but the fact is plain enough that there was no election of the Father in eternity apart from Christ. And that means that those who will be saved were not even contemplated by the Father in the ultimate counsel of His predestinating love apart from union with Christ—they were *chosen* in Christ. As far back as we can go in tracing salvation to its fountain we find 'union with Christ'; it is not something tacked on; it is there from the onset."¹
 3. Salvation brings us into a position, a union, a relationship with Christ. Union with Christ is the wellspring from which flows every Christian blessing.

¹ Murray, John, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955)

- B. Baptism is a visual display of our union with Christ
Romans 6:4-5 NAU - "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,"
Colossians 2:12 NAU - "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."
1. Our Confession (LBC 29:7) – “Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with Him, in His death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into Him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.”
 2. When Jesus died we died with Him. We participated in His death. His death has become our death. In other words, our sin has brought us under God’s condemnation—under the charge of death. At the cross, Jesus suffered in our stead. His substitutionary sacrifice has atoned for our sin.
Romans 6:4 NAU - "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death
 - a. *Going under the waters of baptism symbolize this death*
 - b. In Christ we have died to sin and self. Sin no longer reigns over us.
 3. When Jesus was raised from the dead we were raised with Him; His resurrection is the surety of our resurrection. His life is our life, in which we have been raised unto holiness.
Coming up from our immersion under the waters we symbolize our union with Christ in His life.
Romans 6:4-5 NAU - "so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."
Romans 6:8-11 NAU - "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."
 4. The fruit of this union is victory over sin. Sin will not reign over us. We are united to Christ in His holiness. Baptism is the outward symbol of the inward washing of the Holy Spirit
Titus 3:4-6 NAU - "But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, ⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,"
Romans 6:12-14 NAU - "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

The Subjects of Baptism

- A. The testimony of Scripture points to believer's baptism alone
1. The Baptisms in the Gospels are believer's baptisms
 - a. Clearly the baptisms of John the Baptist and Jesus' disciples make no mention of infant baptism
 - b. Some Paedobaptists attempt to separate the baptisms of John the Baptist and Jesus' disciples from the Christian baptism commanded in the Great Commission.
 - (1) We have to assume that the 12 Apostles were baptized by John or by each other
 - (2) We have no record of their rebaptism after the Great Commission
 2. The examples of baptisms recorded in the book of Acts assume the baptism of believers

Acts 2:41 NAU - "So then, those who had received his word were baptized"

Acts 8:12 NAU - "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike."

Acts 8:36 NAU - "As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?""

Acts 16:14-15 NAU - "A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵ And when she and her household had been baptized. . ."

Acts 16:30-33 NAU - "and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his *household*."

Acts 18:8 NAU - "Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized."

Problems with the Paedobaptist Position

- I. History shows that the early church practiced believers baptism
 Infant baptism did not appear until about A.D. 180
- Paul Jewett – "Beginning with Augustine and moving back to New Testament times, I have evaluated each relevant passage from ancient Christian sources and have reached the conclusion that the practice of infant baptism appears in the Western Church about the time of Irenaeus (A.D. 180) and in the Eastern Church somewhat later, but prior to Origen (A.D. 233)
- (Paul Jewett, *Infant Baptism & the Covenant of Grace*, 7)

- II. There are serious Biblical problems with Paedobaptism
- A. Lack of Positive Command
1. Although there are direct commands and examples for the baptism of believers, authority for the baptism or sprinkling of infants is absent
 2. There is not one single example or positive command in Scripture for the baptism or sprinkling of infants.
 3. Paedobaptists are without positive Biblical evidence or authority
- B. Infant Baptism is not in accord with the Biblical Doctrine of Election
1. Election is not of families or tribes but of individuals
 2. Paedobaptists are guilty of the assumption that there is special favor upon the children of the elect.
 - a. John Calvin – “Our children, before they are born, God declares that he adopts for his own when he promises that he will be a God to us, and to our seed after us. In this promise their salvation is included. None will dare to offer such an insult to God as to deny that he is able to effect to his promise.”
(John Calvin, *Institutes*, Vol. 2, 4:15:20, 525)
 - b. Paul Jewett writes: “The doctrine of ‘presumptive election’ was given confessional status initially by the Reformed party of Switzerland in the *First Helvic Confession*. In this confession baptism is defined as the ‘washing of regeneration.’”
(Paul Jewett, *Infant Baptism & the Covenant of Grace*, 155)
 3. God’s election is personal and saving.
To take babies, make them a part of the church, and then later lose them to hell is a gross violation of election.
- C. Paedobaptism is a serious violation of the command for the church to remain distinct from the world
1. Paedobaptism must either admit that the baptized infants are regenerate or admit that they have brought the unregenerate into the church.
 2. For churches who allow their children to come to the Lord’s Table is to increase their sin by partaking with those who have no part with Christ.
- D. Paedobaptism ignores the consistent example in Scripture that faith and repentance must precede baptism.
- Mark 16:16 NAU** - "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."
- Acts 2:41 NAU** - "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls."
- Acts 8:12-13 NAU** - "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed."

III. The Issue of the Covenants

- A. Entrance into the Old Covenant was with an ethnic nation through physical descent

Genesis 17:19 NAU - "But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

Genesis 17:8-10 NAU - "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." ⁹ God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ "This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised."

1. Every male child was given the sign of circumcision
2. Circumcision is what set him apart from the Gentile world
3. Circumcision was done without regard for whether or not they were true believers in God – The Pharisees were legitimate members of the covenant community though Jesus called them a generation of vipers.

Matthew 23:33 NAU - "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?"

- B. Paedobaptists erroneously transfer the promises given to Abraham and his seed to believers and their seed

1. They fail to recognize that the Abrahamic promises were fulfilled in Jesus Christ – that Jesus Christ is Abraham's final physical seed
2. They fail to recognize that Abraham's offspring are now spiritual – the elect who are his offspring through faith in Christ and union with Him
Galatians 3:7 NAU - "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."
3. Paedobaptists errantly include elements of some Old Covenant promises into the Covenant of Grace and thus redefining the eternal Covenant of Redemption according to the promises of the historical covenants.

Fred Malone writes:

"To project the administratively attached elements of the historical covenants back into eternity past by an erroneous inference and to thereby redefine the Covenant of Redemption and its historical outworking, the Covenant of Grace, is poor hermeneutics at best and unbiblical at worst."
(Malone, *The Baptism of Disciples Alone*, 64)

- C. Entrance into the New Covenant is not dependant upon ethnic descent or heredity

John 1:12-13 NAU - "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

1. The New Covenant is made with individuals on the basis of their faith
Galatians 3:7-9 NAU - "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "All the nations shall be blessed in

you." ⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."

of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

2. The elect are not identified as the offspring of believers but as those who would be brought to faith in Christ

D. The Bible teaches that those who are brought into the New Covenant have experienced a radical change.

Jeremiah 31:33-34 NAU - "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

- a. An infant cannot have this kind of knowledge of God
"for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them"
- b. An infant cannot be said to have been justified
"for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

D. Christians have been circumcised with a circumcision made without hands (Romans 2:28-29; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-11)

1. True believers would be circumcised in their hearts which is putting off the body of the sins of the flesh - this is NOT BAPTISM, which is NOT WITHOUT HANDS.
2. Circumcision was not replaced by baptism, but by a new heart and life, symbolized by baptism.
3. Those who are baptized have already received this circumcision made without hands

Colossians 2:11-12 NAU - "and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; ¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

4. Clearly, this can only apply to believers. To say that this includes baptized infants is to admit baptismal regeneration! (At least one would have to admit that an infant who had "put off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (Col.2:11) would have no need for future conversion!)

- IV. Paedobaptism will have a negative effect upon the purity of the church
- A. The Church defined
1. Invisible Church – the body of Christ composed of all of the elect, redeemed by Christ and effectually called into fellowship with Christ. All of this church will enter into glory and the everlasting presence of Christ.
 2. The visible representation of the body of Christ comprised of local churches with their members. Although the visible church may include members who are not a part of the invisible church it should strive to maintain a regenerate membership. This is accomplished through caution in receiving new members and church discipline for gross violations of Christian conduct.
- B. Paedobaptism leads to an unregenerate church membership
1. Paedobaptists make an improper disconnection between the visible and invisible church
 2. Paedobaptists must either admit to baptismal regeneration or that their children are regenerate from the womb or that they are receiving unregenerate church members
(All three positions are held by various Paedobaptist groups)
- V. Concerning household baptisms –
- A. Many Paedobaptists use the examples of household baptisms to support the baptism of infants
1. This is a dangerous hermeneutic from silence
 2. Households may or may not have had infants. These passages speak of baptism but not of infants.
 3. Since every example of baptism in Scripture is of believers, we must assume that the ones baptized in these households were also believers.
- B. Case study
1. Lydia - **Acts 16:14-15**
 - a. Says nothing about infants.
 - b. Gill points out that she was in Philippi on business and there would have been little likelihood that infants were present. "Her household seems to have consisted of menial servants she brought along with her, to assist her in her business."
 2. The Philippian jailer - **Acts 16:30-33**
Verse 32 states, "and they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Try to envision Paul leaning over the cribs preaching to the infants!
 3. Crispus - **Acts 18:8**
It specifically says that those in the house of Crispus who were baptized were those who "believed on the Lord."
 4. Stephanas - **1 Cor. 1:16**
 - a. This is made ridiculous in light of chapter 16
1 Corinthians 16:15-16 – "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) ¹⁶ That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with *us*, and laboureth."

- b. Are we to assume that the infants of Stephanas had taken leadership positions and that Paul was exhorting the Church of Corinth to "submit" to their leadership?
 - C. The Great Commission established the pattern for baptism. Even if the apostles baptized infants, it was not the believers baptism of the Great Commission. The practice in Acts was not to baptize infants, though we find that believing adults are specifically mentioned.
 - D. Paedobaptists quickly admit that there are no Biblical examples for paedobaptism (yet still defend their position as Biblical).
Louis Berkhof states: "It may be said at the outset that there is no explicit command in the Bible to baptize children, and that there is not a single instance in which we are plainly told that children were baptized. But this does not necessarily make infant baptism un-Biblical."
(Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1939; reprint 1993), 632.)
- VI. Arguments against paedobaptism from the Great Commission - (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15)
- A. The great commission includes ONLY believers. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15) Every use of the word *disciple* in the New Testament refers to a willful follower of a teachers. This would exclude infants.
 - B. If another commission could be found to baptize infants, these infants, UPON BELIEVING THE GOSPEL, must be baptized according to this commission.
 - C. Had the command been to "circumcise them in the name of the Father...". INFANTS WOULD STILL BE EXCLUDED, NO MATTER WHAT THE FORMER PRACTICE OF CIRCUMCISION! This is because the command is to do this to believers!
 - D. Even if the rite of circumcision is continued in baptism the subjects have been specifically limited to believers. The Lord commanded His disciples to baptize believers. To include infants because they are not specifically forbidden is to disobey the Lord.
 - E. The command is to baptize into (ἐῖς) the name of the Father... Indicating union with and subjection to God. Infants can't thus be baptized.
 - F. We are commanded to teach the ones baptized. Infants are not included.
 - G. The practice of infant sprinkling ultimately leads to denying deny true believers the baptism commanded by Christ! The true ordinance is denied, and thus the spiritual benefit of obedience.
- VII. Other Logical Problems with the Paedobaptist position
- A. While properly admitting a difference between the visible and invisible church, the Paedobaptist position does not strive for a regenerate visible church membership (also noted above). Infants are baptized into the church where they remain members unless brought under church discipline. This means that adult children, baptized as infants and brought up in the church (yet still unregenerate), could then baptize their children and perpetuate an unregenerate church membership.

- B. Children raised as church members and receiving all the benefits of church membership are far less likely to see themselves as sinners in need of a Savior. The practice risks poisoning souls. If the church accepts them as members in good standing why would God not accept them?
- C. Are children, who are baptized into the church, then allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper of which they have no part in the Christ of the supper?
1. Are not those who are damned in 1 Cor. 11 for partaking of the Lord's table unworthily (V.27-29) guilty of not discerning the Lord's body (V.29).
 2. Is an unregenerate man (or child) capable of discerning the Lord's body?
1 Corinthians 1:18 – “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”
1 Corinthians 2:14 – “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”
 3. If the children, on the other hand, are excluded from the table, upon what grounds are they denied if the Lord's supper as an ordinance (sacrament) of the church? A.H. Strong states, "No reason can be assigned for restricting to intelligent communicants the ordinance of the Supper, which would not equally restrict to intelligent believers the ordinance of Baptism." (A.H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p.952)
- D. Paedobaptists imply (if not actually affirm) that all of the children of the elect are also elect (also noted above). This would contradict John 1:13.
John 1:13 – “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”
 The implication of paedobaptism is that the faith of the parents becomes the faith of the child.
 The Westminster Confession implies that the infant has been engrafted into Christ Chapter 28:1 – “Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his being engrafted into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life: the sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued until the end of the world.”
- E. There is no Biblical command obliging us to regulate baptism by circumcision but if one were to be found upon what ground of authority would we change the extent.
1. Assuming one's desire to be thoroughly Biblical, those who baptize infants based upon this covenant relationship should baptize only male children
 2. Why do they not baptize only on the eighth day.
 3. Why are not adult children of a new convert baptized?

Arguments on the Issue of Mode

1. The mode of baptism is not an unessential aspect to the ordinance. The mode demonstrates the outward symbolic signs of the inward spiritual realities. The truth of our salvation is demonstrated in the ordinance.
2. The mode of baptism would not be an issue for either side were it not essential for the Paedobaptist position. While it may be difficult to prove Biblically that sprinkling was never practiced (such as in the case of illness), it is also highly difficult to argue that sprinkling was practiced universally to the exclusion of immersion, although some Paedobaptist churches refuse to immerse believing adults even upon request - a clear effort to perpetuate the Paedobaptist position.
Even the *Westminster Confession* 28:3 states: "Dipping of the person into water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person."
3. Although Godly men have argued for the Biblical support of sprinkling as the mode of baptism, Scripture evidence is strong in support of immersion.
The Biblical accounts of baptism show the candidate went down into the water
 - A. **Matthew 3:6** – "And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."
 1. Note, "In Jordan" not with or by the Jordan.
 2. Why would someone go down into a river so that some water could be poured on their head (and this was done consistently!).
 - B. This is seen again in Mark's Gospel
Mark 1:9 – "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan."
 1. Here the word εἰς (eis) is used – literally translated "Into Jordan"
This is also the same word used in the Great Commission –
Matthew 28:19 – "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"
 2. Jesus was Baptized into the Jordan
 3. Disciples are Baptized into union with the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit signifying our union with the godhead. It only makes sense to immerse one into union with Christ, not sprinkle.
 - C. We find the same thing at the baptism of Christ - "and Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water" (Matt. 3:16).
 - D. At the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch - It is implied that they had come upon a body of water. They then went down into the water
Acts 8:36 – "And as they went on *their way*, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is water*; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"
Acts 8:38 – "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."
 - E. In John 3 the place for baptism was chosen because of the large quantity of water. Sprinkling demands very little water. A skin used to carry water could have baptized a multitude.
John 3:23 – "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."

- 4 There is much debate over the meaning of the word βαπτίζω (baptizo, translated baptize).
1. It is of interest to note that the highly respected lexicon of Liddell and Scott, which I quote because it is a secular classical Greek lexicon and thus not as likely to be influenced by theological prejudices, does not give the definition of sprinkle for the word. Rather it uses such definitions as: to be drowned; of ships, to sink; flooded; drenched; to be head and ears in debt; getting into deep water; dipping in water, immersion.
 2. In the New Testament the word βαπτίζω (baptizo) is never used in the passive voice with the word water as the subject of the verb. In other words, water is never said to be baptized (or sprinkled) upon the person which is what you would expect if baptizo meant “to sprinkle.” The person is always the subject as he is “baptized.”
- 5 Even Calvin, himself a Paedobaptist, believed that the Biblical word for baptize (βαπτίζω baptizo) means to immerse.
- “Whether the person baptized is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water, is not of the least consequence: churches should be at liberty to adopt either, according to the diversity of climates, although it is evident that the term *baptize* means to immerse, and that was the form used by the primitive Church.”
- (John Calvin, *Institutes*, Vol. 2, 4:15:19, 524)
- 6 The symbol of baptism seems most appropriate with immersion. Paul said, "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Only immersion gives an accurate picture of dying with Christ and rising to walk in newness of life.